

PEOPLE & THINGS

"THE popular Chief of Police" is a phrase that would ring oddly in most languages, and in French it is almost an affront to common sense. But there is no questioning the affectionate admiration in which M. André Dubois, the Paris Préfet de Police, is held even by those citizens (dustmen, for instance, and taxi-drivers) who are directly affected by the stringency of his new regulations and the demonic energy with which he puts them into practice.

So strange a phenomenon seemed to me worthy of investigation; and when I was in Paris last week I asked M. Dubois to let me pay him a call.

The Préfet's offices have the savour of Proust, rather than of Edgar Wallace. The lift arrives with a whisper, the carpets are ankle-deep, the club armchairs are as big as a swimming-bath, and the major-domo (white tie and tails, from morning till night, and a more-than-mayoral chain of office) would do honour to the Duc de Guermantes himself.

The Rest is Silence

AN aristocratic silence is, in fact, the keynote of M. Dubois' regime. "Noise is a poison," he assured me. "What did I find when I took over at the Prefecture? A population that was irritable, jumpy, overstrained, and relied on its motor-horns for self-expression as much as for safety. But" (and here he leaned across the marble acres of his desk) "science shows us that a person who is exposed for five seconds to the blast of a klaxon takes half a minute to recover his nervous equilibrium. So I decided to relieve the general tension by forbidding the use of the horn."

Eyeing me the while as if the very squeak of my pencil might be injurious to health, the Préfet went on to speak of the great part played by science in his activities. Both encephalography and the electronic brain are constantly busy in the attempt to keep the traffic of Paris safely on the move. But it is human foresight, not science, that will solve the fundamental problem. "Every day," M. Dubois told me, "we are faced with 200 more vehicles—and this is in a city designed by nature, and by Haussmann, for the hippomobile."

M. Dubois is the most *mondain* of Préfets, and the most anglophile, and I could not draw him out on the subject of London's traffic; for when he comes to London he reverts to private life and is known to his friends as a lover of painting and music, a fine talker, and a keen though nonchalant shot.

I doubt if, for some years to come, he will have leisure for these things at home.

Happy Hunting-Grounds

ST. HUBERTUS, the patron saint of hunting, was not a Hungarian; but I often feel that he would look with favour on the extreme opulence which characterises the chase in Hungary—the superabundance of wild fowl, red deer, roe deer, wild boar, pheasant and partridge.

For sixteen seasons these things have been inaccessible to British guns; but I hear from Mr. Best, of Messrs. Rowland Ward's, who last week returned from a tour of Hungarian hunting-grounds, that negotiations for the reopening of four of the finest areas to international sportsmen are now nearly complete. Wild-fowling on the Hortobágy plain, staz and boar-

By ATTICUS

hunting in the forests beside the Danube south of Budapest, and deer-stalking in wooded mountain-country—these are only some of the pleasures in store, he tells me, for those who join one of the sponsored syndicates.

I had thought that under a Communist regime there might be some lowering of standards in the preservation of game, but Mr. Best had nothing but praise for the immense quantity and high quality of all that he saw. Nor was there, even in the wildest and remotest regions, any real discomfort—or, for that matter, any falling-off in the warm friendliness with which a visitor from England is received.

I fancy that, once certain incidental problems have been resolved (the artificial rate of exchange, for instance, and the supply of cartridges suitable for the proofing of British guns), many keen shots will turn eagerly towards Hungary.

The Pickaxe Forestalled

IT would seem that I took, last Sunday, an unnecessarily gloomy view of the future of the Royal Opera Arcade. There is every reason to suppose that, even if Her Majesty's Theatre is pulled down to make way for the new New



The Royal Opera Arcade.

Zealand House, the Arcade will survive intact and continue, as before, to proffer shelter and a full complement of beguiling windows. It has, in fact, been scheduled as a historic monument.

I should also like to make it clear that the hairdressers' establishment which I described with my customary levity was not Messrs. Jacques, whose business at No. 2 Royal Opera Arcade is well known to be exemplary alike in service and equipment.

I thought it only fair to celebrate the survival of the Arcade by reproducing this photograph, which comes from the National Buildings Record's archives and displays Nash's elegant lanterns and ingenious ironwork to advantage.

Miss Hone

IT would not be easy for the Governors of Eton College to replace Miss Evie Hone, who died with her new windows for the College Chapel still not yet in place.

It was only by the finest combination of courage and perseverance that Miss Hone was able to carry on as a stained-glass artist of international repute. Never in good health, she was handicapped dur-

ing the last year or two, (a period of most intensive production) by two strokes, a bad motor accident, and a fall. None of these, however, prevented her working away, with the assistance of the devoted Irishwoman who served her as maid, companion, chauffeur, and studio assistant, and was at her side when she died last Sunday while attending Mass in her local church.

Wagneriana

IT may now, I believe, be taken for granted that the Stuttgart Opera will be heard at the Royal Festival Hall in the early autumn of this year, and that they will bring with them, among other things, Herr Wieland Wagner's productions of "Fidelio" and "Tristan und Isolde."

Herr Wagner's restaging of these familiar classics is a matter for bitter controversy. Only a week ago, when the Stuttgart Opera was in Paris, I saw him greeted with a reception rivaling that accorded to the famous first Paris performance of "Tannhäuser."

Richard Wagner's grandson took it in very good part. "There was a little noise," he said to me afterwards. "But theatre must be controversy. If it is not controversy, it is a museum." A modest, fresh-faced man, looking less than his forty-odd years, Wieland Wagner has his grandfather's profile, and something, too, of Richard Wagner's arresting sense of what tells, in the theatre, and what does not.

In his version of "Fidelio," the inane spoken dialogue is removed, the scene is transposed to an unnamed plateau in outer space, and the characters prowl in and out of an enveloping darkness. It will be interesting to see if South Bank audiences feel, as I do, that, for once Beethoven stands free of absurdity in the presentation of one of his greatest works.

Silence That Slughorn!

I DON'T doubt that among Scotland's supporters at Twickenham yesterday there were many who resorted to what are technically known as "Slughorns, Siogans, or Warcries."

Such warcries can, of course, be mere wordless imprecations. But sometimes a great name is hurled from ten thousand eager throats and thrice repeated. "Cameron! Cameron! Cameron!", we might hear, or (less manageably) "MacGregor! MacGregor! MacGregor!"

I have it on the best authority that only Lord Lyon, King of Arms whose powers must make our own Heralds green with envy, can authorise their employment; and Lyon himself (Sir Thomas Innes of Learney) says that "to use them on a public occasion without Lyon's official allowance would be a Breach of the Peace."

I don't envy the policeman who has to enforce that law at Murrayfield.